

March 22, 2019

Re: SB1085 & HB7371, Connecticut bills to legalize cannabis

Dear Connecticut Legislators,

Thank you for making recreational cannabis a priority, but it's imperative that you don't implement the same half measures that led to our failed drug war. As a nonprofit with many years of experience in multiple states (MA, RI, CT, AR, OK) helping patients in need access doctor visits and cannabis medicine, we implore you to consider the impacts of your current legislation on the patient community. This should include both ensuring multiple means of accessing medicine, since one size doesn't fit all, but also consideration of the concept that all drug use is medicinal in some way, so nonviolent past and future legal offenders should no longer be treated as simply criminals to be punished. Only erasing criminal convictions of 1.5oz or less, when CT's 'personal use' limit was 4oz for decades, exemplifies the inequity that concerns our organization.

Grow rights, gifting, small businesses, and caregiver support are essential to a proper medical cannabis program that is pro-patient. Some of your most vulnerable citizens use cannabis medicine as a life-saving option, reducing dependence on prescription drugs and promoting sustainable healing. Most of these patients can't afford dispensary prices, so growing and use of a caregiver is their only option for optimal health. For example, there may not be enough broad market demand for producers to provide a patient with the specific strain or form of cannabis that their ailment requires. Moreover, many patients may not be able to grow quality cannabis themselves, so caregivers and compassion clubs fill the gaps that broader markets can't. There's no danger in allowing patients to save money and ensure quality by aggregating their resources. Similarly, it will save the state money and empower the patient-doctor relationship to add a clause to the qualifying condition regulations allowing doctors themselves to determine if cannabis is right for a patient, as many other states have done without repercussions.

When alcohol was first decriminalized, it took decades before the market was sufficiently deregulated to allow the microbreweries and home brewing that have provided diverse options for consumers. Connecticut was slow to deregulate then, delaying the economic boom we now see from this market. In order to ensure both the economic and health benefits of cannabis, please follow the lead of our neighbor in MA when crafting the final legislation. Implementing punitive restrictions that presuppose all consumers are potential criminals, such as CT's uniquely confusing naming convention, don't mitigate the risks to teens and drivers with which we're all concerned, but will push patients back to the black market (as is happening on the west coast) and customers to our neighboring states.

Best Regards,

Wendy Love Edge, Founder: <https://www.bulldozerhealth.org/>

Joe Delaney, Treasurer and CT citizen of 06518

For further comments, please email [compassion@bulldozerhealth.org](mailto:compassion@bulldozerhealth.org)